The Shuttle Discover~: Encounter in Space?

KINC: Welcome back to Larry King Live.

A cAmers aboard the space shuttle Discovery recorded a curious sight nine months ago. Some UFo researchers are calling it a breakthrough video: a clear view of a craft, not one of ours, performing a high-speed maneuver. others, with years in the space program, say it's just plain old debris. Judge for yourself. The mission was STS-48, flown in September of last year. As Discovery circled the Earth, the camera picks up what looks like an object drifting from right to left, then suddenly and strangely veering off to the right and out of view, followed by what looks like a tracer or laser from the bottom to the top of the screen.

Another, closer look: The object appears to change direction. NASA says it was waste water dumped from Discovery. UFo enthusiasts disagree and claim NASA has long hidden the full extent of outer space UFo encounters. With us from Los Angeles--Don Ecker of UFo Magazine. In Houston-- space engineer and author, James oberg, who worked on ground communica- tions for this shuttle mission, the one in question.

Don, why are you so sure this is a UFo?

DoN ECKER, "UFo" Maltazine: Well, it certainly has all the appearances, Larry, of being something that is unidentified. It certainly appears to be fly- ing. And we do not normally associate waste water--or, as some pundits are calling it, urine in space--to make drastic right-angle turns.

KING: Why would NASA want to hide it?

Mr. ECKER: Why would the United States Government want to keep this subject under wraps for 45 years? That's an excellent question.

KING: Why?

Mr. ECKER: Well, we could certainly go into the realm of speculation--

KING: I mean, the Government denies it, so you're going to have to tell me why you think they hide it.

Mr. ECKER: oK. Well, to begin with, I have a couple of questions that I want to address to Jim first, Larry, that I think are germane.

To begin with, good evening, Jim. And I have a couple of questions. To begin with, what capacity are you here in this evening? Are you here--

KING: Hold it. They're straightening out Jim's microphone. So let me get straight with you and then they'll let me know and we'll be ready to take that through.

When you saw these tapes for the first time, were you just feeding your own, for want of a better term, frenzy, something you'd been wrapped up with for a long time? o. did you turn this

over for analysis? Did you look at it? Did you inve~tigate their explanation?

Mr. ECKER: Absolutely. As a matter of fact, I have the documents with me with what NASA had claimed that these particular anomalous objects are. There are several events on this particular tape that originally came from a cable television channel back in the Maryland area that downlinked it on the NASA K-band. Basically, this was event number two, which shows a number of anomalous objects in this particular segment of footage, and there are a number of things that just simply don't stack up with what NASA is claiming that these things are.

If you watch the entire segment, you will notice that several moments after this particular event happens, NASA begins preparing for the waste water dump.

KING: oK, now, James are you with us now? Are we clicked in oK?

JAMES oBERG, Sp~ce Eng~neer: That's fine. We can talk to outer space oK, but I had a problem with your--

KING: oK, that's James oberg, space engineer and author. He worked on flight control for the shuttle mission.

And you say this is not phenomena, right?

Mr. oBERG: It's a phenomenon that's very familiar. Larly, we see this since the fireflies on John Glenn's flight 3O years ago. Spacecraft are surrounded by clouds of debris--ice, dust, insulation, and other fragments. These pieces-- and I've seen these tapes and I've seen hundreds of hours of tapes like that-- are alrly ordinary phenomena.

KING: oK, Don has a couple of quick questions for you.

Mr. ECKER: Yes. Jim, what capacity are you here in this evening Are you here as a civilian? Are you here as a representative of Lockheed--

Mr. oBERG: I'm not representing--

Mr. ECKER: --or of NASA?

Mr. oBERG: Don, don't give loaded questions, here. I have no connection with Lock eed. I m a space nut. I'm interested in outer space myths and folk-

Mr. ECKER: So in other words, you're here on your own accord?

KING Yes, in other words, James, you're not here representing NASA, right?

r. BERG: Ill play lt back, Don. I'm not here as editor of a magazine tryingto sell subscriptions.

KING: oK, no, James--

Mr. ECKER: oK, let me ask you this--

KING: Hold it, hold it, hold it, hold it--

Mr. ECKER: Let me ask you this--

KING: Hold it, hold it--

Mr. ECKER: James--

KING: Don--Don--Don, hold it. It's my show.

James, you're not here as a representative of NASA, right~

Mr. oBERG: No. No, I have written on this subject for a long time.

KING: oK. Didyou workon this mission?

Mr. oBERG: Yes~ I did.

KING: In what capacity?

Mr. oBERG: I was in the flight control center, part of helping the deploy-

ment of one of the satellites. So I was there for--

KING: Are you a contracted employee to NASA~

Mr. oBERG: Yes. Yes, lam. Yes, lam

KING: oK, but tonight you appear as James oberg, space engineer--

Mr. oBERG: That's right.

KING: --not representing NASA?

Mr. oBERG: That's correct.

Mr. ECKER: All right, Larry, I have one more question for Jim--

KING: oK, now, go ahead, Don. Go ahead

Mr. ECKER: Yes, I have one more question for him Jim, are you working here under the constraints of any security agreements that you may have slgned with NASA?

Mr. oBERG: No, I'm not. Myself's not the issue. The issue are these pic- tures and the big deal people are making out of it.

Mr. ECKER: Well, this is a simple question, Jim. Are you working under security constraints?

KING: All right, no, James, that's a fair question. Did you sign any kind of an agreement with NASA not to reveal certain things?

Mr. oBERG DoD material, yes. This is not, and this is not covered. Noth- ing about this material is covered--

Mr. ECKER: All right, let me--one last question, Jim--

KING: "DoD" means Department of Defense material?

Mr. oBERG Department of Defense, that's right.

KING: oK. Go ahead, Don.

Mr. ECKER: one last question, and this question is very simple. With the security agreements that you have signed, before we start addressing this par- ticular segment of footage, if you had any awareness of anomalous objects, would you be free to talk about them? And I'm talking about anomalous ob- jects that are not our debris or our spacecraft.

Mr. oBERG: I am totally free to talk about these kinds of topics, anything seen on the shuttle. I have talked about it. I have a long history of writing for omni Magazine and other magazines and books--

Mr. ECKER: Well, no, no, no, that's not what I'm saying--

Mr. oBERG: --because it's clear--

Mr. ECKER: You're usually on--

Mr. oBERG I'm giving you an expert opinion--

KING: Don, Don, Don--Hold it. Guys, hold it. This is not a trial, Don. He answered the question. If it was not a Defense Department fear, he could talk about anything.

Now, would you briefly, James--

Mr. oBERG: There was nothing on STS-48 that was classified, nothing on that flight.

KlNG: All right. Would you tell us, you are convinced beyond question that this is debris?

Mr. oBERG This looks just like it. Now, it could be someone masquerading at it. Look at those pieces. They're small pieces. Why is it that we see these-- It's always small pieces, just at the limit of the cameras. There are always pieces like that

floating around. When jets fire, when things leak out or are expelled from the shuttle, the jets hit pieces. They change direction. I've seen it--I wouldn't say hundreds of times, but I've seen it before on other missions.

KING: Don, what do you think it is? If it's a UFo, what is it, Don?

Mr. ECKER: Well, to begin with, Larry--

KING: I mean, why don't they land here and talk to us?

Mr. ECKER: If, in fact, it were debris--And Jim is very well aware that debris will tumble, will toss, will turn while in orbit. The close-up digitally- enhanced segment of this particular footage shows absolutely no tumbling mo- tion, whatsoever. This is moving in a straight line. It makes a drastic right- angle turn, shoots off into space. Now, if, in fact, it were a result--

Mr. oBERG: Don's got to watch some more tapes. He's got to watch a few hundred more hour~ of tapes and he'll see this all the time.

Mr. ECKER: If, in fact, Jim--Just a moment. If, in fact, it were a piece of debris and if the attitude thrusters from the shuttle had been fired, then, the way the camera was set up on that particular mission, the entire shuttle pic- ture would have moved, because it did several moments after this particular incident .

Mr. oBERG I'm just amazed how much Don can learn about the space pro- gram from so many thousands of miles away from Mission Control. These are the kinds of things--

Mr. ECKER: Well, if, in fact, Jim, we're going to talk about this, fine. If we're going to start od honlineol attacks, that's something else.

Mr. oBERG: All right, let's go back to the films.

KING: We'll come right back with James oberg and Don Ecker. We'll also include your phone calls on this extraordinary topic that never goes away. This is Larry Kmg Live. Don't you go away.

iCoolnlerc~al breakl

KING: Let's start to include your phone calls for Don Ecker--he's a research- er with UFo Magazine--and James oberg, space engineer and author

Huntsville, Alabama--famous area for outer space--hello.

4th CALLER: IHuntsuille, Al~bama/ Hello?

KING: Yes.

4th CA)LLER: My name is o.H. Bond, Jr. [sp?]. I'm in Huntsville, Alabama.

KlNG: Yes, sir.

4th CA)LLER: I have an experiment on the shuttle which has flown a number of times called the Mesoscale Lightning Experiment, in which we look for mesoscale lightning and we look for the effects of unusual events which occur in space.

KING: And?

4th CALLER: Particularly, we look for lightning events which we've seen to go 2O miles straight up into the stratosphere from cloud stocks.

KING: Meaning?

4th CA)LLER: The question I want to ask you guys is--With respect

to these flying objects, I agree with James oberg. From what I have seen over num-bers of years of looking at video images, this is debris from the spacecraft, as far as I can determine. And the second thing is I believe that many of the ob-jects we see are the other debris which is in orbit.

KING: Don?

Mr. ECKER: I would have to ask, Larry, that if, in fact, this is the case that this was debris from the shuttle, why is it not tumbling Why did it make such a drastic turn? The fact that NASA claims--

Mr. oBERG: Can I answer that? If you give me some time, I can answer that.

Mr. ECKER: Well, the question was addressed to me first, and I'm asking the question, Jim, and then you can go to it.

Mr. oBERG: And you'll make sure that you don't--You don't want the an-swer.

KING: All right, but it's a fair question that Don puts, and let Jim respond to it. Why would a piece of debris move like that? I've never seen debris move like that.

Mr. oBERG: Well, you have to--People can watch this. As the shuttle is going through orbit, people don't realize there are more than 5O points on the nose of the shuttle, the tail, on the side--more than 5O points where debris, water, ice, come off--from the belly. And as these pieces come off and rocket engines can fire, they'll form what are called plumes. They'll form a blast. And as debris will go into that area, they will turn, and you can watch this.

Fortunately, we have on the SATCoM F2R satellite and on many, many cable networks the NASA select from space flight. It's the reason that these people saw this tape in the first place. I would simply recommend that they and anyone else watch that tape for more than a few hours. Watch it for several years, in terms of the missions. And they'll be seeing this kind of event.

But the thing about why these are just debris and not spacecraft, alien spacecraft--They're always small. They're always just at the limit of the camera.

KING: But you don't know--

Mr. oBERG: No matter how much the camera is zoomed in, it's still just a dot--

KING: James, this isn't lOO percent--

Mr. oBERG: --and that just tells you these are little pieces.

KING: You don't know it for sure, but it's your best educated guess, right?

Mr. o~ERG: I'll tell you, if we saw some real spacecraft--If I saw some real spacecr.lft--and I know many people in the space programl--saw something out thel.~ that could be really prol)f of something revolutionary, there's no power on earth that would be able to stop people from coming out and being on your show--

Mr. ECKER: Larry, one thing--

KING: All right, let nle get a call in.

Sykesville, Maryland, hello.

5th CALLER: lSykesville, Ma~yland~ Hello, this is Vincent DiPietro.

KING: Yes.

5th CALLER: From Sykesville, Maryland.

KING: Yes.

5th CALLER: I originally did an analysis of this very tape that you're show-

ing on TV.

KING: Uh-huh.

5th CALLER: And I'd like to make a few comments about this.

KING: Are you a scientist?

5th CALLER: I work at Goddard Space Flight Center. I'm an engineer.

KING: oK.

5th CALLER: I work with the space prograrn..

KINC: All righ~.

5th CALLER: But l m ,loin~ this freelallce. And I'd like to say that I've sent tllis to a number of sciellt ists, called a number of engineers, and they've all de-scribed this event as ice.

KING: Ice?

5th CALLER: Ice, that has turned in a way--If you look at the other debris that's on the ~icreen, you'll see that in every case there is a right-angle turn that is ma(le of this debris. In other words, it's not-.-

Mr. ECKER: Well, Vince--Vince, let me ask you a question, because I have the entire tape. And I also have the section that you digitally enhanced that shows clearly a domed disc object that was recorded on this mission. Do you deny that?

5th CALLER: I see that on there, and I do not know what that is.

Mr. ECKER: Did you digitally enhance it?

5th CALLER: Yes.

Mr. ECKER: oK. Did it look to you like an anomalous object, or did it look like debris ol. ice?

5th CALLER: It looks like an object, but I can't explain what it is. And I'm not saying that it isn't something that you're describing. The only thing I'm saying is that the explanation that I have gotten i9 that this debris is ice. There's no way of determining how big it is. It could be a microinch, a couple of inch~s. It's celtainly not several hundred feet across, as a lot of people would be led to believe. And the explanatiun ~ got was that there were rockets,little tiny rockets, th~t are used to ch~nge the attitude of the spacecraft on the sides; that when those things go off--It's nitric acid and hydrozene that fires these rockel~. Wh~n they go off--

Mr. ECKER: Yes, and thel.e is no flash, ei~her, is there~ Vince?

5th CALLER: There is a flash that you can see at the beginning. And if you are so careful ~lS to take a piece of cellophane and put it onto your TV set, you will see thaL all of the~e ohjecLs--~ot the ones that are stars, because the ~tars you CA!~ cleal.ly see go behind the hori7.on. But if you look at the debris that tli~ froll~ left to ri~ht and ~o forth, evelything makes a right-hand turn.

It's even less--

Mr. ECKER: Well, Vince, since you worked on this particular piece of footage,let me ask you another question. Before this event happens, this object rises up out of the blackness and is traveling from right to upper left. Now, if, in fact, it was

there prior to the start of this sequence, how do you explain that?

5th CAELER: I explain that in this way. If you listen Isic] to the tape carefully, you will see that the spacecraft is just coming out of twilight into sunlight. Now, if there was debris flying around in the blackness of space, you would not see it until it was lit up.

KING: oK. All right, we're going to have to do some more on this--

Mr. oBERG: or it might have come over the payload bay where the lights are. Either way, that would explain it.

KING: Let me get a break, and we'll come right back.

Thanks for calling, Vince, by the way.

We'll come back with more. This is fascinating--I don't understand it, but it's fascinating! Don't go away.

[Commerical Break]

KING: All right, we're running close on time.

Don, are we ever going to see one of these land on the White House lawn and speak to us?

Mr. ECKER: Well, I don't know about landing on the White House lawn, Larry, but we had in 1952 three flights that overflew the White House.

I have one last question that I want to ask Jim very quickly and briefly.

KING: All right, real fast.

Mr. ECKER: Jim, are you aware of any NASA studies on UFo phenomena?

Mr. oBERG: I'm aware, Don, of 30 years of phony stories--

Mr. ECKER: And I'm not saying spaceships. I'm saying--

Mr. oBERG: --in UFo magazines--

Mr. ECKER: I'm saying--

Mr. oBERG: --taking transcripts--

KING: Guys, we'll have you both come back. We're out of time.

Thanks, fellows--

Mr. oBERG: --and faking them.

KING: oK, thanks. We're out of time. Thanks very much.

Hope you enjoyed this edition of "Don Ecker Live" from

Washington.

[Laughs] A little fun there.

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